Guardian Angels' NS

Social Media Policy

Introduction

This Social Media Policy was a collaborative school process, involving teachers, staff, parent representatives, the principal, and the Board of Management.

Rationale

Guardian Angels' NS recognises that teachers, students, and parents engage with social media applications (as described further below).

All members of the school community are expected to uphold the values of the school in all social media interactions. Staff, students, and parents will not act in such a way that could reasonably be expected to harm, or does harm, the reputation and good standing in the community of Guardian Angels' NS and/or any existing or former members of the school's community, including without limitation, teachers, students, and members of the Parent/Teacher Association and the Board of Management.

Therefore, it is expected that Guardian Angels' NS staff, students and parents use social media in a respectful and responsible manner. Social media should not be used to insult, present offensive or inappropriate content or to misrepresent Guardian Angels' NS or any member of the school community.

Aims

The aim of the Social Media Policy is to set standards of behaviour for the use of social media that are consistent with the values and expectations of Guardian Angels' NS. The school aims to protect the safety and wellbeing of students, teachers and the wider school community. A breach of the Guardian Angels' NS Social Media Policy will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and the school will undertake disciplinary action where needed.

All posts (whether original or by forwarding a post made by another user/person) of cyber bullying and other technology misuses will be investigated fully and may result in a notification to Gardaí where the school is required to do so. In this regard, please refer to the Guardian Angels' NS Anti Cyberbullying Policy.

Definitions

Social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share, and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks.

The term 'social media' refers to all social networking sites. These sites include, but are not limited to Facebook, Snapchat, Tik Tok, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, KIK Instagram, SMS, YouTube and includes emails and other online or mobile tools through which people connect and share information.

Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed definitions.

Rights and Responsibilities

Staff, students, and parents are expected to show respect to all members of the school community.

Staff will: Plan for the inclusion of cyber safety awareness within the curriculum with guidance from relevant education authorities.

Parents/guardians will: Be responsible for being aware of and informed about their children's online activity and be proactive in the supervision and guidance of their children considering this policy and in particular the school's core values. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that any social media app their child may use and/or have access to, is appropriate for their age and within minimum age requirements for usage of the app.

Pupil Guidelines

When using social media, students are expected to ensure that they:

- Have the permission of their parent/guardian to use/access social media (whether being accessed by the student using any device whilst at home or elsewhere).
- Read and, only to the extent they are permitted to do so (having first obtained the permission of their parent and/or guardian to do so) agree to the terms and conditions of various social media sites, as many of them have age restrictions for their use e.g. Facebook, Instagram and Gmail are all restricted to those aged 13 and older.
- Are aware of what they are posting online, and that social media sites and applications are pupil forums.
- Will neither attempt to or join a staff members' area on networking sites. If students attempt to do this, the member of staff is to refuse the student access and inform the principal. The student's parents/guardians will be informed if this happens.
- Will not access social networking sites at any time whilst on school property and/or during the normal school day.
- Respect the rights and confidentiality of others.
- Do not impersonate or falsely represent another member of the school community.
- Do not bully, intimidate abuse, harass, or threaten other members of the school community in any way.
- Do not make defamatory (i.e., false) comments towards other members of the school community.
- Do not use offensive or threatening language or resort to personal abuse towards each other, members of the school community, or any other person whether or not associated with Guardian Angels' NS and/or the school community.

- Do not harm the reputation of Guardian Angels' NS or its wider community.
- Do not upload video, audio, or photographs of any member of the Guardian Angels' NS community (student, parents or staff).
- Do not upload any video or photographs of any student where they can be identified as a Guardian Angels' NS student by their uniform or any other means.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians

Classroom blogs and other social media tools open communication between students, parents and teachers. This kind of communication and collaboration can have a significant positive impact on learning at Guardian Angels' NS. The school encourages parents to participate in such activities when appropriate but requests that parents always act responsibly and respectfully, understanding that their conduct not only reflects on the school community, but will be a model for our students as well.

Parents/Guardians should:

- Ensure their child fully understands the requirements of this policy and in particular the 'Pupil Guidelines' as set out above.
- Be aware that many social media sites have age restrictions that DO HAVE implications for their primary aged children and should NOT permit their child to access or set up an account with a social media site if to do so would breach the site's terms of use (e.g., by pretending to be older than the child is). Parents/guardians need to monitor their children's online social media activity and read the terms and conditions of various social media sites and app that their children are interested in using. Parents/guardians need to be aware that many of them have age restrictions for their use. Facebook, Instagram, and Gmail are all restricted to those 13 years of age and above.
- Be aware that they are in breach of terms and conditions if they set up a personal account for their children to use if they knowingly understand that age restrictions apply.
- Seek appropriate permission from any individual involved before uploading photos, audio or video. This most particularly applies in relation to the privacy of the staff of Guardian Angels' NS.
- Not share confidential information, internal school discussions or specific information about students, staff or other parents.
- Be conscious of the fact that expert advice given is that all users of Social Media sites should do whatever they can to not identify any child by name or associate them with a particular school.
- Parents/guardians should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information regarding the Guardian Angels' NS. community or its members.
- Parents/guardians assisting with classroom activities should not make use of social media sites while involved in such activities.

Guidelines for Staff and Teachers

Social media in relation to staff and teacher relates to blogs, wikis, podcasts, digital images and video, instant messaging, and mobile devices.

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or Instagram must not be used by staff as a platform for learning activities with students.
- Staff should not accept students as 'friends' on their own social network sites or interact with students on social networking sites.
- Staff and student online interaction must occur only in an educational context.

- Staff are advised to NOT accept ex-students or parents/guardians of current students as friends on personal social media sites.
- Staff must not discuss students or colleagues or publicly criticise school policies or personnel on social networking sites.
- While staff have permission to post photographs of students to the school website, they do not have permission to post details that would identify any child.
- Staff are personally responsible for content they publish online. Staff need to be mindful that what they publish will be public for a long time.
- The lines between public and private, personal, and professional are blurred in the online world. If staff identify themselves online as affiliated with Guardian Angels' NS, then they need to be aware that they are, by definition, representing the entire school community. Staff should ensure that content associated with them is consistent with their work at the school and the school's values and ethos.
- Staff should not participate in spreading false or unsubstantiated rumours or false information about the Guardian Angels' NS community and its members.
- When contributing online, staff should not post confidential student information.
- Staff should visit their profiles' security and privacy settings on social networking sites. At a minimum, staff should have all privacy settings set to 'only friends'.

Managing Change and Issues Arising

We acknowledge that technology changes rapidly. If any member of the Guardian Angels' NS community has a concern or question pertaining to social media or social networking sites, they should contact the principal. Parents/guardians, students or staff who have a complaint or issue arise from social media, should contact the principal.

Review and Implementation

The Social Media Policy is available on the school's website.
The Social Media Policy was formally approved by the Board of Management at its meeting on 15/06/2021

Chairperson

Board of Management

Date: 15/06/2021

References

Anti-cyber Bullying Policy – Guardian Angels' NS
Guidance for Registered Teachers About the Use of Social Media and Electronic Communication – The Teaching Council

APPENDIX 1

Definitions

Social media social networking sites are websites that allow a person to create a personal profile about themselves and then chat and share information with others such as family and friends.

Video, audio and photo sharing websites are sites that allow you to upload and share videos, sounds and photos which can be viewed/heard by web users the world over. Examples include Flickr, YouTube, iTunes U, Vimeo and SoundCloud.

A blog (short for web log) is an online diary, where you post regularly about your life, your passions, business, news, or other interests It is a way of having your own space in the virtual world. Examples include WordPress and Blogger.

Microblogging apps are websites that post micro-blog-like posts to announce what you are currently doing. Examples include Twitter and Tumblr.

Location-based apps (also known as Geolocation) are applications with the capability to detect and record where you and other people are located.

Wikis are websites where users create, edit, and share information about a particular subject or topic e.g., Wikipedia.

Online gaming sites offer games played over some form of computer network and are often based around a community of users e.g., Steam.

News aggregators provide a list of the latest news stories published by users from a range of different web sites, such as Digg.

Ning is an online platform for people and organisations to create custom social networks around specific interests. Ning offers the ability to create an invited closed community website with a customised appearance and feel, feature sets such as forums, blogs, photos and videos.

Forums or message boards are online discussion sites where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

Online multiplayer gaming platforms are multiplayer video games which can support hundreds or thousands of players simultaneously and usually feature at least one persistent world, such as World of Warcraft.